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A
SERMON,
PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH
OF
FREDERICTON,

On the 14th January, 1816;

UPON OCCASION OF A COLLECTION MADE IN AID OF THE
WATERLOO SUBSCRIPTIONS.

BY THE REV. GEO. J. MOUNTAIN, A. B.
Rector of Fredericton.

(Published by Desire.)

[*The Profits of the Sale, (if any.) to be applied to the above-men-
tioned purpose.*]

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tives were destined, in disgraceful chains, to fill up the procession of the victor, to whom the honours of a public triumph, decreed by the state, were regulated by proof required of the number actually slain.---Mark then the contrast.---We hold the person of an inveterate and malignant enemy, who has been the scourge of the world---who has trampled upon every Law of God and man---and utterly forfeited every claim but that of mercy; but Policy not demanding his death we immolate no victim to *vengeance*: Consulting only the security of the world we reserve his crimes for another tribunal; and, as far as is compatible with his situation, extend something of that consideration to him which is due to fallen greatness. Thus Christian nations, in their public acts, begin to learn "*what manner of spirit they are of,*" and to imitate HIM who, when desired by his followers to call down fire from Heaven upon his enemies, assured them that "*he was not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.*"

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THE following Sermon is made public at the desire of His Honor the PRESIDENT of the Province; and other Gentlemen to whose wishes and opinion I am willing to sacrifice my own.

THAT, however, which the judgment has approved when conveyed to it through the channel of the ear, is often found to disappoint our expectation, if afterwards submitted to the eye. In the one case it is like the parting of water which closes again as quickly; and memory alone retains any thing of its effect and appearance: in the other, it has assumed a permanent character, and presents itself in a tangible form. We dwell upon it; we view it as a connected whole; and compare its several parts and proportions.

I much fear that the Sermon which follows, if this test were to be applied with any rigour, would be found little able to undergo it.--- Considered *as a composition*, I might have felt more reluctance in suffering it to encounter the public eye. But as reputation is not, (or ought not to be), the object with the Author of a Sermon, if its faults are not such as to impede any little effect which it may be supposed to have, they are no just bar to its publication.---I cannot indeed, in the present case, anticipate such results as a friendly partiality has pictured; but, being at least satisfied that the Sermon has no *injurious* tendency, I am content to let it go. And if it please God to make it the instrument of any good, I shall feel that I should have been sorry to have withheld it.

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JUDGES VIII. 34, 35. They remembered not the LORD their God, who had delivered them out of the hand of all their enemies on every side; neither shewed they kindness to the house of Jerabbaal, namely Gideon, according to all the goodness that he had shewed to Israel.

IT is here brought as a heavy charge against the Children of Israel, that they were forgetful of the hand of PROVIDENCE, under signal deliverances, and forgetful also of the human instruments which that hand had employed in their behalf. But the words convey a general lesson as to the dispositions and duties which are required in both cases: and if they cast a censure, in both, upon any resemblance to the conduct of the Israelites, so they serve no less as matter of commendation, where an opposite line of conduct is manifested. We are certainly in a situation at this day, which affords full exercise for these dispositions, and duties.--- And it seldom happens that men have so very keen a desire, so prompt and persevering a zeal, so full and adequate a conviction of duty, as to anticipate all reflection and supersede all enquiry upon the subject.

The truth is, that the former of the duties in question, the remembrance of "the LORD our God," in the administration of human affairs, is far from being cultivated, in the degree which its high importance demands. A proud and cold insensibility of Providence---an affectation of wordly wisdom which, (strange contradiction!) *disdains* to look upward---an indisposition to the reverential acknowledgment of a superior direction, are very general characteristics

teristics of the times; times which, it might have been well hoped, would have cured every feeling of the kind. Nor is it less common to see a certain lightness of mind, and selfish unconcern which is uniformly averse to serious contemplation; which tempts us, instead of attentively developing the grand and solemn features of the scene before us, to *turn* the glass through which we view them, and amuse ourselves with the effect of a diminished landscape. Under the influence of this disposition we reduce all events, however imposing in their aspect, or instructive in the lesson which they afford, to the scale of the frivolous and the familiar; and, with something more than a philosophical indifference, we are prepared, although the world be convulsed, to feel no interruption in the every-day story of life.

To secure ourselves then, against the infection of such feelings, it will not be amiss briefly to consider, how offensive is that temper which is so frequently recorded against the Jews,---
 "They remembered not the LORD their GOD:"
 They shewed both an insensibility of his judgments, and an ingratitude for his mercies.

Whenever the ALMIGHTY sees it necessary to humble us by the severer visitations of his Hand, his object being to conduct us to repentance, and to awaken us to a sense of duty, it cannot but be highly offensive to him, if our obstinacy and perverseness, refuse to bend to his design. "Ah! sinful nation;" says the Prophet,

phet, "a people laden with iniquity; children that are corrupters; a seed of evil doers." If we look for the particular proof of sin which calls forth this strong and animated reprehension, we shall find it in the verse that follows: They grew worse under chastisement: "*Why should they be stricken any more?---they will revolt more and more.*"

Or, when GOD, who "*doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men,*" employs methods more congenial to his goodness; when he would touch our careless hearts by signal instances of bounty, and call us to a religious thankfulness by some remarkable deliverance, then, if his hand be unacknowledged, and his goodness thrown away; if neither any proper feeling be excited, nor any change wrought in our lives, our disobedience and ingratitude are of an aggravated die. With what increased severity does Nathan reprove David by pointing out the mercies which he had experienced: "*Thus saith the LORD GOD of Israel; I anointed thee King over Israel, and delivered thee out of the hand of Saul and if this had been too little, I would, moreover, have done such and such things: Wherefore then hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight?*" The Prophet Isaiah calls upon Heaven and Earth to testify against the ingratitude of Israel: "*Hear O Heavens! and give ear O earth! for the LORD hath spoken it: I have nourished and brought up children but they have rebelled*

rebelled against me. The Ox knoweth his owner, and the Ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know; my people doth not consider." The brute creatures in the service of man are more ready to recognize the hand that supplies them, than man himself to bow in acknowledgment before the Father of all.

It is obvious to apply these lessons. We have seen an unexampled series both of judgments, and of mercies dispensed among the nations. Of the manner in which we ought to be affected by those wonderful events and changes that have marked the present age; and especially by the contemplation of those blessings which have distinguished the Mother-country; in the crash of surrounding empires alone opposing her bulwarks uninjured to the fury of the torrent, and the secret power of the undermining tide, and acting as the main instrument of Providence in the ultimate preservation of Europe, I have taken occasion, more than once, to submit to you my opinion: * Suffice it then to observe for the present, that all who have at heart the advancement of the Christian cause, all who are friends to sound principles of Government, and the real welfare of human society,---all especially who are subjects of Great-Britain, have been nearly ~~interested~~ ^{interested}, and ought to feel that they have been

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* To the readers of this Sermon this will not apply. I had intended to publish as an appendix the passages here alluded to. But upon reference to them I altered my intention. They were too much interwoven with other matter; and only contained reflections which can hardly fail to have suggested themselves to every serious and attentive observer of events.

so, in those heavy judgments---in those sweeping calamities---in those long, arduous, and doubtful struggles---in those great and memorable deliverances---in those victories the grandest in the page of history.

But upon the issue of the last decisive combat, how fearfully momentous the consequences that were suspended! What might have been the state of the Universe, had it pleased GOD to order a different result!---The world, the world itself may be said to have been delivered on that day; and the matchless Commander of our troops may fairly be termed a *Gideon* of all the *spiritual Israel*. “*Seeing*” then “*that thou, our GOD, hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us SUCH A DELIVERANCE AS THIS; should we again break thy Commandments wouldst thou not be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping?*”* The means of chastisement are yet reserved, and though removed into a distant corner of the world, and laid by, we trust, to sleep in obscurity, *may*, at any moment, by the mandate of GOD be called forth to execute his vengeance. Whenever a guilty world shall indulge in a presumptuous security, and cast off all remembrance of GOD, his breath can overset, in an hour, the surest calculations of human foresight, and the whole fabric of earthly probabilities: And we shall surely do wisely

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* See Tillotson on this Text.

to consider that if the head of the fallen tyrant, has, all along, been covered from "*the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the arrow that flieth in the noon day,*" it is, if such an expression may be allowed, a *provisional arrangement*, in the Divine administration of affairs. Who can doubt that when, upon a former occasion, his sudden return to power threw all Europe into consternation, and deluged her afresh with blood, it was a judgment which she might have averted by a more humble and religious reception of her previous deliverance?---They indeed may doubt it, who despise religion; or they may doubt it who hold that God deals with the human race by eternal and immutable decrees, and deny the free-agency of man: but the Scriptures teach us that he gives into the hands of his creatures, and invites them to employ the means of warding off their own ruin; they tell us, in particular instances, how he had proposed to act, *in case* of man's acting in such or such a way; they record examples, as that of Nineveh, where destruction, actually prophesied with a fixed time, was withheld, upon the repentance of those who were threatened.*

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* As it is possible that some minds may find a difficulty in conceiving *how* a Providential controul of affairs, consists with the liberty of human actions, I venture to subjoin, a passage from a former Sermon which may serve to assist such an inquiry.

"That the actions of free creatures, as we are—(alas! that we should so abuse our freedom)—that the actions of free creatures are under the Government of the DIVINE PROVIDENCE—that the consequences of these actions, we seldom can calculate with correctness, and never can command:—that, whether considered upon a scale commensurate with the interests of nations, or reduced to the affairs of domestic life, they produce important results of which the very shadow never occurred

But it is time to consider that branch of Duty which is suggested by the latter part of the text: "*Neither shewed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, namely Gideon, according to all the goodness that he had shewed to Israel.*" This indeed is a charge which cannot, with any justice, be brought against the age. It is not to the present purpose to speak of the well-earned honours and rewards which have been accumulated upon the heroes of the day: But, in the exultation of victory, and the homage paid to valour, the horrors and distresses which are their necessary attendants, have been remembered and relieved: Amidst the loudest shouts of triumph and the tumult of public joy, "*the cry of the poor destitute*" has been heard, and the tears have been wiped from off the face of the "*fatherless and widow.*" The thousands who mourn for the consequences of that day---the mutilated in body, and the stricken in heart---those whose dependence is torn from them, and the staff of whose hopes is broken,---have not mourned in solitude to the winds of Heaven: the voice of compassion has replied to them, the open hand of Charity has soothed their sorrows. Their cause has been pleaded in every quarter of the world, and in every quarter the plea is admitted. We shall not be found wanting.---

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occurred to us, and appear to form the links of some chain which we cannot dis-
 ---that this is because they are under the controul and distribution of some Superior Agency--that nothing therefore can happen to us without the Divine permission and design--these are things which are so far from influencing our feelings, that they usually escape even our attention.

I address myself to those whose individual aid will be but little, (and among such indeed many of us whose names have already appeared among the contributors shall freely be content to take our place), but, be it ever so little, let it not therefore be withheld. "*If thou hast little, do thy diligence gladly to give of that little.*" To contribute a *mite*, has become a proverbial expression, let us remember from what occasion it is derived; and what authority pronounced that she who threw in her mite, had given "*more than they all.*" Nor let it be imagined that the effect of such contributions will not be felt. Those who have but very little in their power compose the mass of mankind, and could it be so arranged that the bounty of all these should be brought into operation, their aggregate contribution would be found to outweigh the list of larger donations.---Cut off the little tributary rills, and the body of water in the main stream will soon be sensibly diminished.---These are the principles which should govern the conduct of the individual.

I trust that it is not necessary to urge the peculiar call that lies upon us, under the circumstances of this Province, to bear our part in such a work. That we are inhabitants of Christendom were enough; that we are subjects of the British Empire is more; but it is more yet, that while Europe has been desolated by war, and we have heard its thunders rolling near us upon this continent, the storm has ne-

ver broken upon ourselves. We have, in fact, enjoyed all the sunshine of repose and the serenity of Peace. Our fields do not hold the bones of the slain, and our rivers are unpolluted by blood. Of burning cities, of plundered property, of industry suspended, of families driven to wander without a home, and perhaps to perish by want; of all the alarms and distractions, the sufferings and losses, the arbitrary violences of war, we here have known nothing but by report. In the mean time we are not called upon, in the same way with our fellow-subjects at home, to bear our share of those public burthens which are so heavily augmented by protracted war; an indulgence highly desirable in a young country, but one surely which should teach us to shew in every *voluntary public offering* that forwardness of spirit which St. Paul commands in the liberality of the Corinthians: "*I know*" says he "*the forwardness of your minds for which I boast of you to them of Macedonian, that Achaia was ready a year ago and your zeal hath provoked many.*"

We shall be the more ready to join hands in this design when we consider it as a striking instance of that change in the manners of the world which has been produced by the Gospel of CHRIST. Before the influence of the Gospel had operated, humanity was a virtue almost confined to the present impulses of feeling which were excited by such objects as obtruded themselves. That steady and enduring

ring principle of Charity which seeks and keeps its object in view; that provident beneficence which appears in the foundation and endowment of hospitals and numerous institutions of a similar nature; that comprehensive philanthropy which gives rise to the association and joint exertions of private men, for various humane purposes, and dictates, for the relief of great and extensive calamity, the employment of national resources, or the general appeal to voluntary bounty---all these are exclusive distinctions of Christianity.

War itself, under the same benign influence, has gradually relaxed the sternness of its countenance, and lost many of its horrors. Compassion and forbearance find their way into the scenes of destruction, and mitigate the ravages of death. And let us be allowed to exult in saying that the soldiers of Britain shine as brightly in the example which they yield of these virtues, as in that ardour which leads them on to victory, and that calm steadiness of courage which is unequalled in the world.

The great nations of antiquity, the monuments of whose art we yet revere, and whose literature we explore with delight, held it honourable to wage wars of mere conquest.--- Their celebrated warriors were not only unsparing in retribution, but invaded, without provocation the territories of others---laid waste their countries---and carried away the flower of their armies: These wretched captives